

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Farmland Restoration Grant

2022 Grant Application Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
April 12, 2022, at 4:00pm***

Updated Guidance: March 11, 2022

**Ned Lamont, Governor
Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner**



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Important Information:

Applications must be received by: April 12, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Applications will not be accepted after 4:00 p.m. on April 12, 2022

Questions can be directed to: Lance Shannon, Lance.Shannon@ct.gov or Simon Levesque, Simon.Levesque@ct.gov

On **Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.** a virtual webinar will be held for interested agricultural producers and cooperatives to learn about the Farmland Restoration Program application process. The webinar will be held utilizing Webex and the link to join via a video call or voice call is below.

To join the call, please follow this link:

<https://ctdoag.webex.com/ctdoag/j.php?MTID=mf1e558b6c6f7b3081b86fdb3bd2cf92a>

NEW: This Guidance has been updated as of March 11, 2022. The following information has been updated and noted in **green**:

1. Page 13: Grant Narrative. Please note the additional clarification regarding items requested in the Grant Narrative.

Grant Description:

The Farmland Restoration Grant (FLRG) provides matching funds to Connecticut farmers, nonprofits and municipalities to increase food and fiber production in the state by restoring lands into active agricultural production. FLRP focuses on restoring and improving land with prime and important farmland soils, in accordance with a Farmland Restoration Program Plan (FLRP Plan).

Funding for the Farmland Restoration Grant is made possible by Public Act 11-1, codified in Chapter 422 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Farmland Restoration Grant and any awards are subject to the requirements and provisions of state funding.

For the purposes of this grant, farmland restoration is the act of bringing land into agricultural production for human food, animal feed, or livestock grazing.

The maximum grant awarded is **\$20,000.00**. Applications of any amount up to the maximum possible award will be considered for funding. There are two opportunities for funding under the Farmland Restoration Program. The opportunities for funding are for projects on either **publicly owned land** or for projects that are on **privately owned land**. Applicants will choose the grant that best fits their property to apply.

Eligible Applicants:

The following entities are eligible to apply for the Farmland Restoration Grant:

1. Agricultural producers, singularly or jointly, whether such producers are owners or tenants of existing agribusiness within the State of Connecticut with at least one year of production experience.
2. Not for profits with a property being used for agricultural production.
3. Municipalities with farmland in use by a farmer with a lease no less than five years in duration, and a five-year option to renew in place.

Producers must be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State, if established as a limited liability company or corporation and obtain or be applying to obtain a Farmer's Tax Exemption Permit. Farms should be a business in good standing with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, all State, and Federal requirements.

Not for profits must be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State and provide a copy of the federal IRS exemption letter. To be considered eligible for this grant, non-profits must have three years of consecutive 990 forms on file with the IRS (from 2017-2020).

Prior grantees may apply for a Farmland Restoration Grant. Open awards, past awards, project completion and outcomes of current awards will be considered in the evaluation of this award application. Applicants who have received two years of consecutive funding will be ineligible for an award for one year. Applicants can reapply for funding in the next grant cycle.

For example:

2020: Project awarded
2021: Project awarded
2022: Ineligible for an award
2023: Eligible for an award

Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment:

All eligible expenses funded by any Farmland Restoration Grant program must advance farming and agriculture as defined by [Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-1\(q\)](#).

Matching project funds are required by the applicant. Matches can be provided through cash or in-kind services. The cash match requirement can be self-financed, bank-financed, or provided through another grant (federal, state, or otherwise). If other grant funds are providing the match, the applicant must disclose the grantor, the grant name, and amount awarded. Please be aware per CGS 22-6c, no more than 90% of the total project cost can be covered by state and federal funds. Matches can not be from other DoAg funds.

A three-year profit and loss statement and current profit and loss must be provided at time of application.

Match Requirements and Examples:

Projects on **Publicly Owned Land: These are lands owned by a municipality or that are state-owned land** – there is a **90/10 Match**. 90% of project expenses may be grant funded, 10% of project expenses should be covered by the applicant as the match. *For example: With a \$10,000 project: Up to \$9,000 of the project may be covered by this award and at least \$1,000 of the total project costs must be covered by the farmer.*

Projects on **Privately Owned Land: These reference land that is owned privately by a farmer or not for profit** – there is a **50/50 Match**. 50% of project expenses can be grant funded, 50% of project expenses are covered by the applicant as the match. *For example: With a \$10,000 project: Up to \$5,000 of the project may be covered by this award and at least \$5,000 of the total project costs must be covered by the farmer.*

For in-kind match requirements that are using volunteer hours, please reference the [Independent Sectors](#) information on the volunteer cost per hour.

Expenses:

The following **expenses may not be used as a match** and will **not be funded by this grant**:

- Any expense incurred prior to contract execution
- Land acquisition/mortgages
- Cost of borrowing (points and other fees)
- Any portion of expense for which the applicant barter/pays a contractor in merchandise or

service in lieu of cash

- Routine business expenses (example: equipment maintenance)
- Disposable supplies (office, farm, otherwise) unrelated to the project
- Legal expenses related to litigation
- Indirect or contingency costs of any percentage
- Land remediation expenses
- Projects conducted on brownfields or contaminated lands
- Purchase of general-purpose equipment (cars, trucks, boats, tractors, chainsaws, etc.)
- Lobbying

The following **expenses are an acceptable match** if they directly and meaningfully support the proposed project:

- Employee salaries/payroll paid to execute the project
- Attorneys' fees (not related to litigation)
- Consumable or disposable supplies (example: gas, oil)

Examples of **eligible expenses for grant funds** to cover:

- State/local/federal permits related to the project
- Rental of equipment
- Hiring contractors
- Well digging
- Fence and fence installation
- Soil amendments
- Irrigation
- Pumphouses
- Stone and stump removal
- Land clearing/brush hogging
- Invasive removal
- Tree pruning/maintenance
- Field drainage

Payment

This award is a reimbursement grant. Funds cannot be paid to the awardee until the project is completed to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Agriculture and all project expenses have been paid for and documentation has been submitted to the Department. The Farmland Restoration Grant may only be paid directly to the individual or organization who is the awardee and listed on the grant contract.

Incomplete projects will not be fully reimbursed.

Once awards are made no additional funds will be awarded, even if a project's expenses increase. Conversely, if project expenses are less than originally projected, for example the project only costs \$8,000 instead of \$10,000, a prorated amount will be paid for completed work. Using the same example of reduced costs, only \$4,000 would be paid by the Department for a project with a 50/50

match even if the original contract indicated funds available up to \$5,000.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

Projects must be **completed within 18 months** of contract execution. Contract and project extensions are not allowed. **Applicants should be prepared for an anticipated contract start date of July 1, 2022.**

Applicants of awarded projects will be responsible for the following:

1. Signing an agreement with the State of Connecticut
2. Providing a Certificate of Insurance holding the state harmless or listing the state as an additional insured on the grantee's liability insurance policy
3. Completing the contract within the contractual timeframe
4. Working with the assigned soil scientist to develop the restoration plan and restoration report
5. Submitting a final project report in the required format per the executed contract
6. Submitting a final financial report itemizing actual expenses. Copies of invoices and proof of payment must be submitted with the payment request at the conclusion of the project
7. Other requirements as outlined in the State of Connecticut contract

Upon receiving an award, awardees will receive guidance on necessary contract requirements from the DoAg program coordinator.

By applying to the Farmland Restoration Grant, awarded applicants agree that land improvements that result from this award shall be used for agricultural purposes for at least five (5) years or the duration of the lease (if a lease is applicable).

Submission Process:

All Farmland Restoration Grant applications are required to be submitted through the Department of Agriculture's online grant portal. Applicants will need to create an account for the grant portal.

The grant portal can be accessed [here](#).

Instructions on how to apply for grants on the DoAg Grant Portal is located [here](#).

For additional information on the grant application submission process, we encourage attendance at the **grant writing workshop on March 23, 2022.**

Applicants should consider applying well in advance of the grant deadline, as the Department will not review any applications submitted late, even if technical issues prevented the applicant from submitting on time. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the portal prior to submission and to communicate timely with DoAg if there are accessibility or other concerns.

Application Requirements:

A complete application includes:

1. Grant Narrative (please see **page 13** of this guidance for more information).
2. Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook
3. Aerial maps of the project area. Please include on this map a detailed sketch of the project, identifying what will be done to the land. *The aerial maps can be obtained from Google maps or USDA.*
4. Soil(s) map of project area. *These can be obtained from NRCS or online at the [Web Soil Survey](#)*
5. Assessor tax card and tax map for the property. *These can be obtained from the municipal tax assessor's office or possibly online.*
6. Map identifying the common land units for the property. This map may include field locations and names, crops grown, and acres per field. *These can be obtained from a local USDA Service Center. These must be scanned as pdf files for the application process.*
7. Pictures of the project area as it currently exists, prior to the project being completed.
8. Profit and Loss statements for up to the previous three years.
9. Valid Farmer's Tax Exemption Permit or application to obtain a Farmer's Tax Exemption Permit.
10. If applicable – an approval letter from the easement holder for approval of the project. *A template for the approval letter can be found on the Farmland Restoration Grant webpage at www.CTGrown.gov/grants.*
11. If applicable – a copy of an executed lease and a statement from the owner for approval of the project. *A template for the approval letter can be found on the Farmland Restoration Grant webpage at www.CTGrown.gov/grants.*
12. If applicable – an approved copy of an NRCS Conservation Plan or Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.

Evaluation Criteria and Process:

The Farmland Restoration Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as outlined above submitted timely, will be evaluated. The evaluation will be weighted heavily on the project plan described in the Grant Narrative.

Project applications should clearly present how the project will be accomplished and undertaken in a reasonable timeline.

Additional information, such as quotes, conceptual drawings, and other documentation justifying and supporting the budget and project, is required to present a competitive application. All prospective purchases for the completion of the project should be accompanied by a quote or estimate. Projects that involve hiring a subcontractor should include quotes from the subcontractor.

Applications to the Farmland Restoration Grant shall be evaluated based on:

1. **The soil composition of the project area.** Does the project area contain prime, important, or locally important farmland soils?
2. **Existing conservation easement or application under consideration.** Does the land where the project is taking place have a conservation easement?

3. **What the land is going to be used for.** Is the land going to be used for the production of human food, animal feed, or livestock grazing?
4. **Farm business planning.** Does the farming operation(s) using the land have a current farm business plan?
5. **Annual gross farm sales.** How much revenue is being generated by the farming operation(s) using the land?
6. **Who owns the land?** Is it state-owned, a municipal property, or a farm with a charitable, community or educational component?
7. **The type of production practices used.** Are [USDA Climate Smart](#) practices and resources being used by the applicant?
8. **Who is farming the land?** Is the farmer of the project land a new farmer with one to three years of production experience? Are they a limited resource or socially disadvantaged producer?
9. **Outcome and impact of the project.** Has the applicant identified an outcome and impact as a result of the project?

Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook

The information provided below for the Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook is for informational purposes only. The three excel sheets within the workbook will need to be filled out and submitted with the appropriate MS Excel fillable form link available at [Farmland Restoration Grant Program \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/farmlandrestoration) and added as an attachment on DoAg's grant portal.

Budget Sheet:

Budget Application Form 2022 Farmland Restoration Grant								
<p>Directions: In the cells below, itemize the project expenses for each category. The sum function will automatically total the itemized expenses in each of the gray category boxes. Rows can be added in each category if needed. Be sure to check the sum function of each category to ensure it includes the additional rows added.</p> <p>In addition to the itemized budget below, please also fill out the budget narrative (on the next sheet) that contains the following information: a. Where the match is coming from (cash, loan, other grant, etc.) b. Sufficient explanation and justification of the financial support requested and the need for a cash advance (for New Farmer Micro Grant)</p>								
BUDGET	ITEMIZED SUBTOTALS - GRANT FUNDS	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED	ITEMIZED SUBTOTALS - MATCH FUNDS	IN-KIND MATCH BY APPLICANT	ITEMIZED SUBTOTALS - MATCH FUNDS	CASH MATCH BY APPLICANT	TOTAL COST	
SALARIES AND FRINGE. Employee salary & fringe paid to execute the project is eligible. Salary is an eligible cash match as well.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Salary and Fringe 1:	N/A		\$0.00		\$0.00			
EQUIPMENT. Equipment to be purchased per the project. Attaching quotes to justify the expense is required.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Item 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
*RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT. Rented equipment required to complete the project (rollers, heavy duty equipment)	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Item 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
*MATERIALS & SUPPLIES. A list of materials and supplies required for the project.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Item 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 3:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 4:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 5:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT. Expenses associated with procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant. If more than one, each contractor/consultant hired must be described separately. Attaching quotes to justify the expense is required.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Contractor 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Contractor 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
OTHER COSTS. A list, with descriptions, of each item listed as "Other Costs"	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 3:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 4:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 5:	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
PROJECT TOTALS	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	

*If you're hiring a contractor do not break up the contractor's estimate into the various budget categories. The contractor's full cost/estimate should be listed as one item in the *Consultant/Contractual* category.

Budget Narrative:

Budget Narrative 2022 Farm Transition Grant Application

The budget narrative should contain evidence or justification for costs reported on the budget sheet. For example, to complete your project you plan on utilizing two of your employees. While the budget sheet shows that the cost for your employees to do that work is \$8,000, here is where you justify that cost with an explanation.

For supplies or materials ordered online, insert a link to the product or service in the justification column. Remember to include shipping/freighting costs in the total cost of the item.

For example:

Item	Justification	Total Cost	Is this cost covered by another grant? If so, please indicate the grant name, awarding agency, and grant amount.
Salary	2 employees, \$25/hr, 4 hrs per week for 40 weeks	\$8,000	N/A
Other Costs: 3 Hydro Flow Clear Vinyl Tubing, 1/4 Inch (ID), 100 Feet	3 at \$24.95 each, plus \$28.06 estimated shipping: https://hydrobuilder.com/hydro-flow-clear-vinyl-tubing.html?opts=eyJhdHRyaWV1dGUxNDYxIjoiaMTg:NzUIHQ=	\$102.91	Grant A, USDA, \$2000

Fill out the table below as it pertains to your project. Add or remove rows as needed.

Item	Justification	Total Cost	Is this cost covered by another grant? If so, please indicate the grant name, awarding agency, and grant amount.

Project Timeline:

Project Timeline
2022 Farm Transition Grant Application
Include all project milestones and related deadlines. Applicants must budget in three months to plan the project once the contract is executed, 12 months to execute and complete the project, and 30 days past project completion for all reporting.

Projects must be completed within 18 months of contract execution. As a reminder, no extensions will be given. No incomplete projects will be funded.

The following template will be used to provide the project timeline. Anticipate a project start date of June 1, 2022.

For example:

Task	Anticipated Timeline
Contractor Hired	By 7/1/2022
Building permit acquired	By 8/1/2022

Fill out the table below as it pertains to your project. Add or remove rows as needed.
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Task	Anticipated Timeline

Grant Narrative

The information provided below for the Grant Narrative is for informational purposes only. The Grant Narrative will be completed and submitted through DoAg's Grant portal.

Farmland Restoration Grant 2022 Grant Narrative

The following questions will be asked on the Farmland Restoration Grant application on the grants portal. It is recommended that you type your answers using Microsoft Word and then copy and paste your final answers into the spaces provided in the application portal.

- 1. Introduction** – Introduce your business and tell the reviews about the project area. Include information such as:
 - a. What is the current and existing use of the project area?
 - b. Are you a [limited resource or socially disadvantaged producer](#)?
 - c. Do you use [USDA Climate Smart](#) smart practices on the farm? Will you use climate smart practices on the land once the project is complete.
 - d. Are there any prime, important or locally important farmland soils in the project area.
 - e. Have you made any efforts to improve the soil and land in years past?
 - f. Have you consulted the NDDB online and are there any wildlife or plants that are referenced.
- 2. Project Explanation** – Explain in detail what your project is, what your project will do for your business. Be sure to identify how many acres are to be restored and [if the land going to be used for the production of human food, animal feed, or livestock grazing](#). What is the cost per acre to complete the project? Please note, a 4000 character limit when drafting your response.

The reviewers will be looking for a statement that begins with “This project will....”

- 3. Goals and Tasks** - Describe in detail the goals and tasks needed to complete your project. Your answer here should reflect the tasks outlined in the Project Timeline from the Budget and Project Timeline Workbook. We want to understand exactly what you will accomplish and how.

For example:

Goal 1: Clear four (4) acres of land.

Tasks to Complete Goal 1:

1. Rent necessary equipment.
2. Identify employee (or subcontractor) to run equipment and clear land.

- 4. Project Outcome or Impact** – How do you predict the completion of this project will impact your business for the next three to five (or more) years? Please identify at least one outcome you strive to achieve after completing the project.

An *outcome* is a quantifiable result and is usually accomplished after the project is done.

Example: 5 additional acres will be put into production and will allow the farm to produce 15% more of its total feed therefore reducing the amount of feed the farm has to purchase.